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# NEWSLETTER

Spring 2011

The Regional Afghan Municipalities Program for Urban Populations, Regional Command East (RAMP UP East) started in June 2010 with the purpose of creating effective, responsive, democratic, transparent, accountable, municipal governance in the fourteen provinces that are within the International Security Assistance Force's (ISAF's) Regional Command East.



*On March 9<sup>th</sup> 2011, the city Mayor of Maidan Shar inaugurated a solid waste collection project and new solid waste receptacles supported by RAMP-UP East*

## ABOUT RAMP-UP East

RAMP UP East comprises of three distinct components, each tied to a specific goal: Component 1 - Capacity Building of the GIRoA officials at the municipal level, Component 2 - Support to the GIRoA to provide responsive, effective, and visible municipal services, Component 3 - Support to the GIRoA to improve economic development and revenue generation. The RAMP UP East team is guided by six primary principles that are applied throughout all program activities:

- **Afghan Ownership**
- **Afghan First**
- **Demand Driven**
- **Long-term Capacity of GIRoA**
- **GIRoA Empowerment**
- **Learning by Doing**

## PROGRESS

JANUARY-MARCH 2011

- ❖ Four municipalities of Bamyan, Ghazni, Asadabad and Gardez produced for the first time self-funded municipal affairs newsletters.
- ❖ Supported by RAMP-UP East, the three municipalities of Charikar, Khost and Mahmud Raqi launched a pilot business registration projects that will contribute to improving tax collection.
- ❖ Six municipal service delivery improvement projects were inaugurated in Bamyan, Puli Alam, Maidan Shar, Asadabad and Mahmud Raqi.
- ❖ In February, Nine municipal Engineers received construction management training from RAMP-UP East. The training comprised of project design, site safety and laborers management skills.

# Municipal Highlight...

## Business Registration Project launched in Charikar, Khost & Mahmud Raqi

In the last quarter, RAMP-UP East supported the launch of a business registration pilot project in the municipalities of Charikar, Khost and Mahmud Raqi.

The Mayor of Charikar, Ghulam Sediq, said “this project will enable the municipality to have an overview of businesses in the city and to track economic progress. It will also ease making contact with shopkeepers for tax collection purposes.”

In Khost, the municipality also started the business registration project and has collected data for businesses and properties. An estimate of 13,000 businesses will be registered and categorized by the municipality. An analysis will be undertaken later on to draw up plans for potential new revenue generation opportunities.



*In Charikar, the business registration project will assist the municipality to improve tax collection*

Similarly, a presentation on business registration was given in Mahmud Raqi of Kapisa for the municipal officials and the process was explained to the Mayor. The Mayor strongly supported the initiative and gave his endorsement for start-up of the project March or April.

Although business registration in itself will not generate additional revenue from taxes or fees for the municipality, the registration process will provide municipal staff with an effective tool to manage the revenue collection. The success of the scheme will depend on the municipality's ability to use the new information to levy and collect taxes and fees that are due.

## RAMP-UP East to Support Afghanistan Municipal Planning Conference on April 6-7

The 14 Mayors of provincial capitals in the Eastern Region of Afghanistan will participate in the Afghanistan Municipal Planning Conference to be organized by the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) and RAMP-UP East. The 2-day conference will review municipal action plans prepared by the municipalities located in ISAF's RC East area. These capacity building action plans outline efforts to enhance the urban management capabilities of the municipal staff. The plans identify small-scale projects to improve the delivery of basic services to the community such as solid waste collection, sanitation, roads and drainage, public parks and other urban infrastructure and services. The plans also contain activities that support local economic development and increase revenue generation opportunities for the municipality. The development and implementation of the Municipal Improvement Plans is supported by USAID's RAMP-UP East program in close collaboration with IDLG and the participating municipalities.



## Public Participation:

### Mayor: Mahmud Raqi Municipality is not able to provide services without citizens support

On February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011 Mahmud Raqi city Mayor shared his concerns over the lack of municipal revenue resources during a citizens' forum. The Mayor explained to the participants that the municipality would not be able to provide basic services without a contribution from the citizens to the municipal revenue.

According to the Mayor, Mahmud Raqi is one of the poorest municipalities in Afghanistan as the municipality does not own any property to help it generate revenues and deliver public services. The Mayor apologized to the citizens on behalf of the municipality for not being able to address all their demands for improved municipal services. The Mayor was quoted as saying "I'm happy that we all, citizens and municipality, are gathered under one roof to discuss and solve our problems. Let's give a hand to each other and collect revenue to help the municipality serve the public."

The Head of the Revenue Generation Department shared the municipality's report on income and expenditures from March 2010 to February 2011 with the public. The report stated that the municipality collected approximately 100,000 Afghanis during the whole year. The problem facing revenue generation in Mahmud Raqi is compounded by the lack of public awareness of the functions and responsibilities of the municipality and a shortage of municipal staff members.

After the Head of the Revenue Generation Department finished his speech, citizens exchanged views about the tax collection and the municipality's performance. Dal Agha, a member of the Community Development Center asked Mr. Nazanin Khan of the

Revenue Generation Department "where does the revenue collected through taxes go?"

Responding for the Municipality, Nazanin Khan explained that 45% of the money is allocated for salaries and operational expenses while 55% is used to provide municipal services. He also explained that the development budget was not sufficient because of the shortage of revenue sources.



*February 22<sup>nd</sup>, Mayor of Mahmud Raqi shared with citizens his concerns about the municipality's lack of revenue*

The representative of the Labor Union Aminulah requested that the municipality share with the public the Municipal Revenue Generation Report and Tax Payers list to improve transparency and accountability.

Finally, the Mayor repeated his request for the forum participants to raise public awareness about paying municipal taxes and help the municipality sustain and expand its services.

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# Public Service Improvement Delivery Projects:

## Bamyan Historic City to Get Mosaic Sidewalk and Trash Bins

RAMP-UP East has recently launched preparations for the implementation of two public service delivery projects in the Municipality of Bamyan. Both projects had been selected by citizens during the Municipal Improvement Planning meeting held in the autumn of 2010.

On March 8<sup>th</sup>, activities began for the construction of waste disposal enclosures and the start of a solid waste collection program. The project includes the installation of fifteen trash bins located around the city as recommended by citizens and the municipality.

The existing trash collection service will be expanded to include new residential areas and solid waste disposal at the landfill site. An estimated 10,000 households will benefit from the improved solid waste collection service supported by RAMP-UP East.

Citizens of Bamyan city can also look forward to use the new mosaic pedestrian sidewalk that will be constructed in the town. The 7,365m sidewalk rehabilitation project is expected to start at the end of March, if weather conditions permit. The project will be of significant value to the city as it enhances the beauty of a city that is recognized by UNESCO as a world heritage site and is frequently visited by foreign and local tourists.

The existing sidewalks in the commercial area are in a poor state of repair and limit access to the bazaar, particularly during the winter months. Eight hundred small shops are expected to directly benefit from the project that will improve the appearance of Bamyan's city streetscape and will enable easier pedestrian access to the bazaar.



*Citizens of Bamyan prioritized solid waste management to improve city sanitation*

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